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10 quotes from Reassigning Meaning

While retaining the term disability, despite its medical origins, a premise of most of the literature in disability studies is that disability is best understood as a marker of identity.(225) The way the term disability is used, it’s now used more to label someone instead of understanding the full scientific definition.

I would add extrapolating from the definitions of racism and sexism that ableism also includes the idea that a person’s abilities or characteristics are determined by disability or that people with disabilities as a group are inferior to non-disabled people.(223) Ableism has become close to what sexism and racism were, the discrimination of those who are different from us.

To say that I am physically challenged is to state that the obstacles to my participation are physical, not social, and that the barrier is my own disability. (226) Using the word “physically challenged” makes one with a disability feel as if their socially accepted only being held down by physical means.

Labeling the education and its recipients special may have been a deliberate attempt to confer legitimacy on the educational practice and to prop up discarded group. (226) Using words such as “special” is only masking the problem of the disabled child and disregarding the definition of special.

[Similarity] It is not the neutral, universal position from which disabled people deviate; rather it is a category of people whose power and cultural capital keep them at the center. (235-236) Similarity is used to judge those with a disability and makes them the “center of attention” in a negative way.

The relationship between abnormality and disability accords to the nondisabled the legitimacy and potency denied to disabled people. (231)The term abnormal is linked those who have disabilities by those who are “normal” denying those with disabilities to feel “normal”

Even when a disability is obvious and impossible to hide on an ongoing basis, families sometimes create minifictions that disabled people are forced to play along with. (229) Families can’t accepted the fact that their loved one is disabled, thus they do thing to pretend they do not have a disability.

Constructing the axis on which disabled and nondisabled fall will be critical step in marking all points along it. (235) Forming and equal relationship between disabled and non-disabled is key in order to make those with disabilities feel equal.

Saying someone is suffering from a condition implies that there is a perpetual state of suffering, uninterrupted by pleasurable moments or satisfactions. (232) The interpretation and used of the words “suffering from a condition” is often misused when relating to disabled people, because they are not always suffering from their disability.

The question of who “qualifies” as disabled is as answerable or as confounding as questions about any identity status. (225) People are often confused on how and who to label as “disabled” and is almost in equal terms of identifying race.